



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98101

Reply To

Attn Of: ECO-083

Informational Memo

**Subject:** Invasive Species Update: May & June 2003

**From:** Joan Cabreza  
Regional Invasive Species Coordinator

**To:** R10 ECO Management Team

**ecc:** IS mail list

This is the second bi-monthly update on the Regional invasive species program progress. I am including my own activity and activity by various other individuals as I become aware of it, and am also including related information on related state/national actions. Please let me know if you find these updates helpful, or conversely, whether do not wish to receive them.

**Networking and Connecting Outside.....**

ORD-Region 10 invasion pathways pilot project. I organized two conference calls with Cincinnati ORD, the WA ANS Coordinator, the State Spartina Coordinator and the Willapa Refuge to discuss possible RARE projects related to ballast water. ORD has agreed to conduct a pilot project (no-cost to R10) which will provide the basis for our RARE proposal early next year. ORD will evaluate gene flow and transport processes for green crab and *Spartina*, to determine their origin and identify invasion pathways. Once the methodology is established, the RARE proposal would propose to expand the work to other Puget Sound species. State staff will supply the samples, and the work will be coordinated with researchers at the University of California as well. This work is important because the percentage of invasive species arriving into Washington via coastal transport, as opposed to those arriving from Asia and elsewhere, is not known. If most of our invaders come from other west coast areas rather than overseas, it is questionable how successful the WA ballast water control program can be if it is not coordinated with that of California.



WA Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Committee. I attended the monthly Executive Committee meeting, chaired by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on June 10. This has proven to be a good way to connect with most of the major state IS players and gain some EPA "presence". Updates on agency activity were shared. (See below).

WA Ballast Water Workgroup. At Washington's invitation, I attended the June 24 WA Ballast Water Workgroup meeting in Bellingham. This workgroup, chaired by the Governor's office, is required to submit a report on ballast water technologies to the legislature in December. We

toured the Groton ITB (integrated tank and barge) at Cherry Point, to get a better understanding of ballast water issues and to discuss the potential for treating the ballast on this class of vessel. Nationally, Washington appears to be in the forefront of ballast water technology, and will begin to approve ballast water technologies some time next year.

West Nile Virus. Sharon Collman has prepared a West Nile Virus Powerpoint presentation and display materials for training various audience groups, and given the presentation to EPA staff, an Edmonds Community College class, and the Center for Urban Horticulture. She has also written an article for the Center for Urban Horticulture newsletter which has been picked up by several local newspapers and garden center publications. She attended several workshops for the purpose of networking and learning about the various aspects of mosquitos and the virus, and has assembled a growing file of clippings, articles and documents on WNV and mosquitoes. She is also tracking and gathering information on sudden oak death, recently found in WA, and the citrus longhorn borer. She's also following several other exotic insect and plant diseases that have not yet reached this region: emerald ash borer, a bromeliad weevil, two-lined Japanese weevil, and a new paper wasp, *Polistes dominulus*, which has established and spread with unprecedented speed, substantially diminishing Colorado moth and butterfly populations.

International Invasive Species Conference presentation. Henry Lee and several others including myself, co-authored the paper (*The Millennium Challenge: The U.S. EPA's Response to Invasive Species*) which Henry presented at the international IS conference in Ontario on June 10.

Willapa Bay Visit. At the request of Willapa Bay, I visited the National Wildlife Refuge to exchange information, build some contacts, and learn how they are dealing with *Spartina*. Willapa Bay now contains the largest *Spartina* infestation on the west coast; it covers 11,000 acres and has been expanding at a rate of 20% per year. The Refuge intends to make a serious effort at reduction this summer, and feels this is the "make or break" year for *Spartina* control. Several years of high funding will be needed for total eradication. They expect to obtain more than \$1 million in control funding from the Legislature, and if they cannot show significant population declines this year, with such extensive funding, they feel they may not be given another funding opportunity of this magnitude. Although spraying is limited to hours with low tides that allow maximum herbicide exposure time, they are using a percussion sprayer with 30' booms, which can treat 100 acres/hr, and they intend to treat 3500 acres in the 2003 season. Populations usually require 3 years of re-treatment for total eradication, but if funding levels can be maintained for an additional five years, they hope for total eradication.

Earthcorps meeting. At Earthcorps request, I met with the Director on May 1, to exchange information and see where we might mesh activities, and to provide information on EPA grants. He also provided several interesting statistics that may be of general interest:

- 70% of the 4000 acres of Seattle urban forest have ivy groundcover
- the average time from when ivy begins to climb a tree to tree death is 20 years
- An area that requires 100 hours for ivy removal the first year requires only 6 minutes the third year (so eradication is possible)

Student Conservation Association (SCA) meeting. At SCA request, I met with the Regional and Pacific NW Directors on June 12, to exchange information and determine how we could mesh activities and support each other.

Kiwanis Club Presentation. I presented a slide show on invasive species and beneficial landscaping to the Issaquah Kiwanis club May 30.

Ballast Water Technology Forum. I attended an all-day ballast water forum, organized by the WA ANS committee, on May 14. A number of new ballast water treatment technologies were presented, which have implication for WA program development and possible grant applications.

NISWG (national EPA Non Indigenous Species Workgroup): We are developing a survey form for use in gathering data from regional and HQ offices for this year's annual Agency Report required by the Executive Order. I have also been part of a 3-region NISWG subcommittee developing a generic grant condition related to invasive species, which are attempting to insert in all EPA grants. Since attempting this top-down through HQ may be a long process, I plan to meet with the Grants Unit in July to see how we can implement this quickly within R10 as we wait for HQ response.

### **In the Region 10 Office ...**

Brown bag video. I purchased the PBS video detailing the Mediterranean sea takeover by *Caulerpa* algae, and held a brown bag presentation June 17. About 30 people attended, and as another 25 have asked for a repeat showing, so I'll schedule another this July. The video is presently circulating on loan among the Operations and Place-based offices upon request. It was shown in AOO on July 3 and now in IOO.

Video streaming. Dave Tetta is setting up a new process called "video-streaming" on the EPA intranet. This allows videos to be accessed by individual computers and headsets at any time. He has put "From Net to Sale", a 20-minute Minnesota Sea Grant invasives video, onto the system. After the system is tested, if space allows we will add the *Caulerpa* video and others there as well.

Invasive Species Team formation. The regional office IS team formation is underway, and I hope to hold the first meeting in early August. The first priority will be getting team input on the regional workplan and determining what role people want to play in the process.

Invasive species reference collection. A set of binders containing and cataloguing species-specific information for invasive species in Region 10 was established, and is already being put to good use: EPA staff had five requests for species-specific information from the first week.

ECO Invasives Removal. The Office of Ecosystems held its annual retreat at Lincoln Park April 30, and for 2-3 hours 60 people removed invasive holly, gorse and knotweed and resurfaced a trail. The park was very pleased, and has asked whether we would "sponsor" the trail on a long term basis. Like most places, their budget for invasive removal is small, and they rely on volunteer help to control existing invasive species.

HRC Proposal. I submitted a proposal to HRC for a regional ivy removal as part of the Washington Ivy-Out initiative. No response yet on this proposal.

RGI grants. Five invasive species RGI proposals were received. Apparently only one is expected to be funded, but I hope to generate interest by many applicants next year.

### **Happening Around Region 10.....**

#### **Washington Activity**

Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS). The WNPS State Board has decided the overall theme for the next five years will be habitat destruction, and invasive species is their first area of focus and energy. There are a number of ways that WNPS could become more involved in invasive species, such as surveys that would benefit the state noxious weed program. I have also

been asked to come speak to the Board on this topic. (Thanks to Linda Storm for promoting this issue within the State Board!)

NEP Monitoring program: In April, money was received from HQ to develop a monitoring plan for the three National Estuary Program sites (Lower Columbia, Puget Sound, Tillamook Bay) in R10. Monitoring plan development is underway and the plan should be completed by the end of the year. The Puget Sound Action Team is taking the lead in this effort.

Ballast Water Study: WDFW is developing a contract with Glosten (a Seattle marine engineering firm) to determine the effective ballast water exchange volumes for various tanker configurations using rotamine dye. This study is important because the U.S. Coast Guard standard requires a 95% ballast water exchange, considered one complete empty/refill of the tank, or a flow-through exchange equal to three times the tank volume. Since tanker configurations vary, the standard may not fit all tankers equally, making this level of exchange insufficient for some ships (and therefore not sufficiently protective) while requiring others to do more costly exchange than necessary.

Navy MOU. While on detail with EPA Pesticides, Joe Divittorio (USN) developed a draft MOU that would allow better invasive species management on Navy property in Washington, by coordinating biological control use with state agencies. The draft MOU has now been sent to the State Department of Agriculture and the State Noxious Weed Board for discussion. If successful, it may become a template for other areas or branches of Department of Defense as well.

Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop. Ralph Rogers attended an 8-hour workshop hosted by Padilla Bay Reserve in La Conner on May 30. The workshop provided information on a number of invasive plants and animals in both freshwater and marine environments, including Spartina, green crab, knotweed, purple loosestrife, bullfrogs, ballast water and clams, milfoil and others.

Control funding: There is a \$162,000 proviso for green crab monitoring in Puget Sound in the budget currently awaiting the Governor's signature (ESSB5404). There is also \$466,000 in ALEA (?) funding for WDFW Spartina control activities.

Atlantic Salmon Surveys: WDFW has hired four science technicians experienced at doing snorkel surveys and contracted Pacific States Marine Fisheries to conduct Atlantic Salmon surveys over the next three years. Most of the funding comes from Alaska, as part of their efforts to protect native salmon runs, and the surveys will be coordinated with surveys done in Alaska and B.C.

Asian food brochure: Puget Sound Action Team and WDFW have been working with Asian Communities to develop an educational brochure addressing prohibited species that are favorite food items. The brochures will be translated into six languages and distributed through various cultural centers. WDFW is also working with these groups to survey live products available at Asian food markets to become aware of what is actually being imported. WDFW hopes to add some of these species to the prohibited aquatic animal species list this fall.

Zebra Mussel Video: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is contracting with WDFW to develop an educational video to train law enforcement officers in boat inspections for zebra mussels and other invasives. Expecting many visitors during the Lewis and Clark Centennial, many states along the Lewis and Clark Trail wish to set up an inspection plan, and WDFW and the State Patrol have had a program in place for over three years. WDFW also currently spends two hours weekly educating WDFW enforcement officers about invasive species, new ANS laws and rules, and boat inspections.

State Noxious Weed List Update: The Noxious Weed Control Board is currently updating the State noxious weed list. There are no aquatic plants proposed for addition to the list this time.

Spartina control efforts: The Spartina control program started a little late this year and has had delays due to equipment problems, but the Department of Agriculture has purchased 660,000 gallons of herbicide to apply this season, and the Willapa Refuge is also getting their crews certified and licensed. They plan on treating 90% of the infested areas in Puget Sound and between 3,000 and 4,000 acres in Willapa Bay this year. If they can accomplish

their treatment goals, they estimate 5 years to full eradication in Puget Sound, and perhaps six-seven years in Willapa Bay. Timing is critical as the work must be done during long low tide.

Washington Rapid Response Plan. SSB 6553 (2002) requires WDFW to develop an ANS rapid response plan. Plan development is now underway, and a draft may be available for review this summer. This legislation also requires a inspection plan for all watercraft entering the state.

IvyOUT project. Sponsored by the Native Plant Society, Earthcorps and others, IvyOUT work parties were held in 50 urban Seattle parks for work in May and June. They hoped to have 10,000 volunteers and invest 40,000 hours. (For work party locations, see [www.ivyout.org](http://www.ivyout.org) and [www.earthcorps.org](http://www.earthcorps.org)). Mercer Island has taken the “easy” way out and is proposing a 15% property tax hike to fund ivy removal on the island.

Green crab workshops and monitoring. Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Nahkeeta Northwest, and WDFW held Green crab workshops June 7 and 8 to provide information and training on native and European Green Crab identification, history, monitoring and data collection protocols. They are also soliciting volunteers to set and retrieve traps once a month from April-September, to monitor for the crabs. Widespread monitoring is an important precautionary measure to ensure early detection of this new invasive species. (To volunteer: call Jean Olson 360/766-6008)

### *Oregon Activity*

Invasive ornamentals. Robin Rosetta (OSU) is trying to develop information on invasive species with an ornamental emphasis for nursery growers in the Northwest. A website is being created at [http://oregonstate.edu/Dept/nurspest/invasive\\_species.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/Dept/nurspest/invasive_species.htm). She’s looking for information on organisms not here in the Northwest yet, but likely to find their way here. Any suggestions on specific organisms to include are appreciated.

The Oregon Ballast Water Bill, HB 3620 is still in the state legislature. Follow the fate of this bill at the Oregon legislature web site: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/searchmeas.html>

kNOwIVY day. The No Ivy League held an ivy removal project May 3, organizing over 1000 volunteers at 49 locations throughout Portland and surrounding areas. The event will be repeated with annual follow-ups.

Ongoing grassroots invasive species work in Oregon: The Oregon Weed Board held the Oregon 4<sup>th</sup> annual noxious weed event. They have surveyed all 18 Counties in eastern Oregon re citizens' understanding of invasive weed problems; conducted workshops; placed full-page spreads in several newspapers on invasive weeds; and provided funds for community awareness weed events. In addition to the OWB funding, EPA has also provided funds for some of these efforts in the past. (Chris Kelly, LaGrande office)

The NW Oregon Invasive Weeds Management Partnership began in 2001 as an informal group of federal, state county and non-profit organizations to prevent introduction and spread of noxious weeds in Oregon. It now has more than 30 organizations in the partnership, involving almost all of the major land managers, including the USFS and BLM. Their goals include production and distribution of technical information on cooperative weed management. They would like EPA to work with them, and I am working with Alan Henning (Eugene office) to explore ways we can interface and provide meaningful assistance to the partnership.

### *Alaska Activity*

Alaska ANS plan. Alaska is beginning state ANS plan implementation. Four committees have been set up: inventory and ranking, education, research, and laws and certification, and each has a set of tasks. The strategic plan is being revised, research needs are being prioritized, a weed awareness week is scheduled for July 14-20, and a draft volunteer guide to weed pulling events, “*Pulling together Alaska*” was developed in May (Marta Mueller)

### *Idaho Activity*

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### National Update...

Aquaculture and Coast Guard (CG) Ballast Water Rules. Lisa McGuire, currently on detail to R10, is developing the final Aquaculture Rule for HQ. The rule requires facilities to minimize escapes of non-natives, and she is collecting information on potential risks. She will also be part of the EPA staff writing the EIS for the CG Ballast Water Regulations.

OWOW IS Strategy. OWOW is developing an IS strategy to be implemented first within Office of Water, and hopefully expanded later to all of EPA. It has not yet been shared with the regions for comment.

#### Bills Under Consideration Now in Congress:

Nat. Aquatic Invasive Species Act (NAISA). This bill reauthorizes and expands NISA, **providing a greater role for EPA, particularly in the area of ballast water treatment and protocol development.** Tracy Mehan (OW) has provided testimony, and EPA has been asked to participate on a cross-agency committee to make technical changes in the legislation.

HB 266. This bill would codify the National Invasive Species Council. Since the Council is the result of a 1999 Executive Order, without codification the Council could be disbanded easily at any time. The bill was reintroduced this session, with hearings held on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

H.R.1081. Aquatic Invasive Species Research Act. This act would establish marine and freshwater research, development, and demonstration programs to support efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species, educate citizens and stakeholders, and restore ecosystems. It would initiate a research program run by NOAA, USGS and the Smithsonian to determine how harmful species enter U.S. waterways and if policy efforts are helping stem their entry. **The bill also would fund an EPA program to develop tools for federal, state and local managers to fight invasive species;** support Coast Guard efforts to lessen the risk ships pose in transporting the pests; and create a grant program within the National Science Foundation to support research for identifying and controlling invasive species. The bill would dedicate \$214 million over five years. The Environment, Technology and Standards Subcommittee unanimously approved H.R. 1081 in March.

New NOAA AIS Center. NOAA will create a new National Center for Research on Aquatic Invasive Species office in Ann Arbor, Mich., to study invasive species. The center will set up regional coordinators in the nation's six major aquatic coastal regions. It seems likely (but was not stated) that WA/OR is likely to be one of these areas.

## **Upcoming Events**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Brown bag planned.** "Invasive species 101" brown bag to provide general information on current and upcoming activity, similar to the ET presentation, for interested staff. (Regional office).
- 9/9-10/03. Western Regional Panel, annual meeting. La Jolla, CA.
- 9/23/03 Speech to WA Public Port Commissioners in Vancouver
- 11/3-7/03 7th International Conference on Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions Ft. Lauderdale, FL

## **Major Documents Expected for Regional Review**

- OWOW strategic plan (coming August??)
- USFS EIS -IS management in 21 WA and OR National Forests (Coming soon)National NEPA guidance (coming this fall?)
- BLM 19-state EIS on noxious weed control (Coming \_\_\_\_\_)
- WA ANS Rapid Response Plan draft (coming\_\_\_\_\_)
- USCG EIS - Covers ballast water standards (Coming early 2004?)
- WA ANS Emergency Rapid Response Plan ?